DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 150 919 HE 009 660

AUTHOR	Valley, John, R., Ed.; Hamilton, I. Bruce, Ed.
TITLE	Matching New Needs with New Resources. Issues in Nontraditional Study, Volume 1.
INSTITUTION	College Entrance Examination Board, Princeton, N.J.; Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J. Office of New Degree Programs.
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	95p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Director, Office of New Degree Programs, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08540 ($4.00, or $3.00 is prepaid)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$4.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Educational Innovation; *Educational Planning; Higher Education; *Nontraditional Students; Policy Formation; *Political Influences; Resource Allocations; State Agencies; *Statewide Planning; *Student Needs

ABSTRACT

This is the first number of a series devoted to the analysis of critical issues facing institutions, systems, and other organizations serving the learning needs of a variety of new learners by nontraditional methods and means. Four essays are included: assessing adult learning needs (I. Bruce Hamilton); synthesizing needs and resources (Patrick M. Callan); educational planning and politics (Henry J. O'Donnell); and five implications for state planning (John R. Valley and I. Bruce Hamilton). (Editor/MSE)

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Issues in Nontraditional Study

Volume 1

HE009 660

New? Matching ∧ Needs

New? with ∧ Resources

Office of New Degree Programs

GENERAL EDITORS: JOHN R. VALLEY, I. BRUCE HAMILTON

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD • EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE

One of a series published by the Office of New Degrees Programs, an activity jointly sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service.

Copies may be ordered by writing the Director, Office of New Degrees Programs, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. Price: $3.00 when order is accompanied by payment; otherwise $4.00. New Jersey residents add 5% sales tax.

ISSUES IN NONTRADITIONAL STUDY

John R. Valley and I. Bruce Hamilton

General Editors

Office of New Degree Programs

College Entrance Examination Board Educational Testing Service

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Editors' Notes

This is the first number of a series devoted to the analysis of critical issues facing institutions, systems, and other organizations serving the learning needs of a variety of new learners by methods and means that may differ from those traditionally used. The editors hope this publication will help alert readers to current problems, and stimulate fresh thinking about ways of dealing with them.

An Open Invitation

In order to be effective, the editors must identify significant issues and find appropriate, thoughtful analysts to discuss them intelligently in the context of the real word, not a theoretical one amenable to ideal solutions. Both the issues and the arguments must be grounded in the current events and trends of the day. The editors must be kept abreast of these issues, from contacts with colleagues in the field, and others who perceive problems not yet evident to the profession in general. This is, then, an open invitation to the reader to share with us your concerns. Help us identify those issues about which we are now only dimly aware, so that future editions in this series might address them. By this means the editors hope the series will be maximally useful to educators working at the edge of new ventures.

The Office of New Degree Programs

It may be helpful for those readers unfamiliar with the Office of New Degree Programs (ONDP) to review a brief history of its formation. Early in the year 1970, the officers of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) and Educational Testing Service (ETS) perceived the emergence of substantially different versions of what postsecondary education might be like. At that time Open University in England had been announced but was not yet operational. And in the United States, the New York Regents External Degree, the University Without Walls, Metropolitan State University in Minnesota and several other external degree programs had either just started or had just announced their intention to proceed. A new vocabulary was developing that included words like educational contracting, mentors, time-shortened degrees, external degrees and experiential learning.

In response to this ferment CEEB and ETS took two important steps. They launched a commission to study these developments, to interpret them and to offer recommendations to all parties and organizations concerned with post-secondary education. This was the Commission on Nontraditional Study chaired by Samuel B. Gould, which completed its work after two years and issued a report entitled Diversity By Design. The second step was to establish the Office of New Degree Programs. This activity was to develop immediate contacts with the implementors of new programs as well as with the proponents or planners of new programs. It was to monitor these developments and to report on these developments both to the

staffs and to the educational community generally. Wherever possible ONDP was to facilitate and encourage access to the competencies and resources of its sponsors by organizations or institutions engaged in degree programs that were new because they were directed to new student clienteles, or because they involved new delivery systems or assessment approaches, or because they were different in content or curricular design.

In the years since 1970 ONDP has undertaken a number of projects, including an inventory of new programs, which resulted in the monograph, Increasing the Options (Valley, 1972), a series of conferences on nontraditional study, a set of periodic publications listing new activities encountered around the country (Education Recaps, special editions 1-8), and occasional studies of significance. In the latter category two publications are currently available: The British Open University in the United States, Adaption and Use at Three Universities (Hartnett, et al., 1974), and The Third Century, Postsecondary Planning for the Nontraditional Learner (Hamilton, 1976). (See the back cover for ordering information.)

Antecedents to this Issue

Several months ago, the editors were struck by a complex problem arising in several states: Field studies had revealed a significant demand for further learning opportunities among adults that seemed to imply a major set of responses by existing institutions, and perhaps the creation of new educational resources. Yet some of the field studies were open to question, and it was unclear whether or not the demand was indeed "hard" enough to warrent the reallocation

of scarce dollars, or the application of new support. Conflicting information seemed to frustrate educational planners and political leaders alike. In a major study of nontraditional institutions, Medsker and his colleagues wrote as follows:

> It may be that despite the results of some market surveys to the contrary, the demand for new services at the undergraduate level is not as great as it may have first appeared -- at least, not over and beyond what the community colleges can meet. This is not to imply that there will be no need for some external degree programs at the undergraduate level; it may merely suggest that there are not as many people interested in pursuing a baccalaureate program as had been projected. (1)

As a foil to these cautious projections, several notable new institutions founded in the early 1970's and devoted to the needs of the new learners were flourishing, and many other new programs at existing institutions were rapidly expanding to meed the demand. The editors feel that this conflict deserves a rational discussion at this time, and prepared this issue carrying the title, Matching (New?) Needs with (New?) Resources, which we believe captures the essence of the conflict beautifully.

Four papers approaching the theme from differing perspectives were commissioned by ONDP in the spring of 1976, and delivered orally at a conference sponsored by the Education Commission of the States and the Harvard Graduate School of Education at Cambridge, Massachusetts on May 16-18, 1976. The conference title was

(1) Medsker, et al., Extending Opportunities for a College Degree: Practices, Problems and Potentials, (Berkeley California: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, 1975) p. 299.

Nontraditional Education: Strategies and Implications for Statewide Participation. The four papers were subsequently edited into three which appear in this issue.

The first focuses on ways and means for determining learner needs. The second looks at how data about learner needs can be synthesized and integrated into plans and strategies that meet needs on statewide basis. The third, by raising into consciousness the fact that education is but one of several social priorities, deals with the integration of educational planning with the political realities and political forces within educational systems and the state at large.

What are the rationales behind these three analytic approaches? The first approach pursues such questions as how does one determine learning needs and learning resources? Are there different approaches for assessing needs and resources? If so, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Where have such studies been undertaken, by whom and when? What are the findings of these studies? Do the studies corroborate each other or are these unique findings? This approach has be developed by I. Bruce Hamilton, with significant input from Francis U. Macy, Director of the National Center for Educational Brokering.

The second approach takes off from the position that there is already in place an educational establishment consisting of public and private resources but these resources currently are not being marshalled, directed and utilized as effectively as possible.

There is need to bring new arrangements into being if the challenges are to be met. The question then becomes, what is the role and function of the state's designated planning and coordinating agencies? How can they effectively allay fears that new demands will drain support from existing programs or that state priorities may shift, leaving some institutions without a significant mission to fulfil? The analyst of this second paper is Patrick M. Callan, Executive Coordinator, Washington Council for Postsecondary Education.

Third, assuming that it is possible to establish the reality of unmet educational needs and the insufficiency of current approaches to such needs, and assuming further that carefully conceived and workable plans or designs can be conceptualized, how does one pull it off? The issues here are matters of leadership, support, organization, strategy and tactics. This paper was prepared by Henry O'Donnell, Special Assistant to the Governor of Massachusetts, to help us understand the processes in the complex political arena.

Finally, the editors reflect on these statements, and the recent history of statewide attempts to translate learner needs into workable programs, and speculate on methods by which this problem may be approached nationally.

September 25, 1976

The Editors
Issues in Nontraditional Study
Office of New Degree Programs
College Entrance Examination Board
888 Seventh Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10019

Volume 1

MATCHING (New?) NEEDS WITH (New?) RESOURCES

October, 1976

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ASSESSING ADULT LEARNING NEEDS

Current Methods and an Indication of Findings

I. Bruce Hamilton

For a variety of reasons, state systems of education, as well as individual colleges, are increasingly interested in determining what educational services are needed to meet the growing demand for learning opportunities from working adults, part-time learners, and those who for various reasons cannot partake of traditional, on-campus educational offerings. Part-time enrollment in colleges and universities is rapidly growing,[1] and continuing education, extension, and adult evening and weekend colleges are expanding at an unprecedented rate.[2] In addition, a wide range of new types of institutions and programs providing off-campus, individualized instruction, validating service, or counseling and advising have sprung up since 1970.[3] These opportunities, often aimed at a particular type of learner, are commonly known as nontraditional programs.

Educational planners have for several years been aware of

I. Bruce Hamilton is currently Assistant Director, Office of New Degree Programs. In 1974 he was Executive Director of the Council for the Progress of Nontraditional Study, a group charged with carrying on the work of the Commission on Non-traditional Study. Background for this paper was derived through the completion of a major statewide learning needs analysis for the State of Iowa.

the impending decline of graduating high school seniors over the next fifteen years,[4] and the statistics which show the rapid growth in numbers and percentage of the population of those who are 25 to 44 years old--the adult group who have been found to be the most interested in further education.[5] But these officials are often uncertain about what these statistics mean for their own state or institution, what types of educational delivery or student services may be needed, and how to plan for these changes. In the past, casual planning has often been based upon surveys of the educational plans of graduating seniors[6] and forecasts by faculty and administrators in colleges and universities. Imponderables such as rapid shifts in "glamor" fields, the draft, a depressed economy, and other unforeseen events have invalidated some of the best-laid plans, yet the need for good forecasting has increased as uncertainty about the future grows and resources remain in scarce supply.

In this circumstance one useful strategy has been to undertake field polling to reveal adult and nontraditional student educational plans, needs, and interests. Another has been to gather data on local demand through the help of adult counseling and information centers. It is the purpose of this paper to review briefly several of the field studies, comment upon the utility of one or another survey strategy and methodology for particular purposes and give an overview of some interesting findings to date.

It is hoped that this exercise will be of interest and material assistance to state authorities, institutional planners, and implementers whose responsibility it is to develop adult learning needs analysis strategies of their own.

The rising popularity of learning needs surveys

Adult education, until quite recently, was viewed as a peripheral activity of the educational enterprise whose major purpose was to bring the adult population who were foreign-born or not well served in their youth up to a functional level of competence adequate to today's social needs. Two early surveys of adult participation rates which describe characteristics of adult learners were a 1959 U.S. Office of Education study, Participation in Adult Education,[7] and a 1962 National Opinion Research Center survey reported by John Johnstone and Ramon Rivera in Volunteers for Learning (1965).[8] These early surveys provide the benchmark from which subsequent studies measure progress.

Through the 1960's and in the early 1970s, the boom years in higher education, saw the inclusion of first one, then another group of Americans who could be defined as poorly served by the academic community, culminating in the realization that in fact anyone who wants and needs further education has the right and ought to have access to an appropriate educational experience. The dramatic

growth of the community college movement is one indication of this open learning philosophy, followed by the establishment of a host of experimental and nontraditional programs monitored by the Office of New Degree Programs.[9]

The counting process, begun in 1959, continues. The National Center for Educational Statistics began a series of triennial surveys in 1959 which confirm the rapid growth of adult education. The 1969 survey has been published for some time,[10] and data from the 1972 survey are now available, including data based on a sample of 50,000 households and 105,000 persons ages 17 and older.[11] The 1975 survey is now complete, but no results are yet available. Adult enrollment according to these surveys has increased by close to 10 percent each year since the late 1960's.

In 1972 the Educational Testing Service (ETS) contracted for a national survey of the potential market for continuing education with the Response Analysis Corporation. The study[12] was one of a series completed for the Commission on Nontraditional Study, a group co-sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service. It was based on a national probability sample of 2,515 households, from which 2,004 responses from 1,248 households were returned. The sample was then adjusted by several demographic factors to produce a final, weighted sample of 3,910 that was representative of the total U.S.

population. This study estimated that 32 million adult Americans were engaged in some sort of postsecondary learning, and that millions more were potential new learners if appropriate services were available.

Following the lead of these national surveys, a number of states and other researchers and contractors conducted a host of state, regional, and local learning participation and needs assessment studies for a variety of purposes. The Office of New Degree Programs has evidence that there were at least 47 such studies completed between 1970 and the present. In addition, at the present time, at least 17 studies are under way, including statewide studies in Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, and Pennsylvania which will soon be available.[13] By any measure, it is clear that survey studies are a popular and useful strategy for forecasting demand and designing appropriate programs to meet it. The key questions for planners are, what kind of study do we need, for what purpose, and who should do it? The answer to these questions lie in a careful look at the efficacy of various survey methodologies used in differing settings.

Types of field surveys

There are four basic types of field surveys. By far the most commonly used by educational planners is an ordinary mail questionnaire. Often these questionnaires are distributed to agencies and institutions to draw on locally derived data, but

on occasion mail surveys are distributed to participants in programs (to determine their attitudes and opinions, as well as to collect facts about them), or to the general public through some wide distribution technique.

Mail surveys have the advantage of being a relatively inexpensive way of gathering data. If the population to be queried is well defined and of limited size, if no particular biasing effect would likely occur by the self-selection of respondents, and if the rate of return and the absolute number of usable returns relative to the universe population is adequate, then it is a satisfactory method to use. If a large population is to be surveyed, sampling techniques need to be employed to avoid serious errors in interpretation, and often a stratified sampling of randomly selected respondents is called for. Even then, serious sampling errors can occur; response rates are likely to be quite low, self-selection biasing effects can be severe, and total sample size in relation to the universe may be too small and unrepresentative to provide meaningful results.

One must remember that in the mail survey technique, respondents, not the researcher, are doing the selecting, no matter how carefully one sets up a sampling strategy. In a study of a region where 10,000 adults reside, and in which 500 residents, chosen at random from the telephone directory, receive questionnaires, very little can be scientifically inferred from a return of 150 questionnaires. The response

rate, the total number of responses (1.5 percent of the universe), the biasing effect of a directory selection technique, respondent self-selection, and unknown sampling errors add up to a meaningless effort. Mail surveys are not generally effective in large-scale sampling.

The same general cautions apply to other wide-scattered, unfocused sampling techniques such as newspaper cut-out questionnaires, surveys left in supermarkets and other public places, requests for data using broadcast media, and the like. Only if one wishes to identify people likely to respond to a new idea, question, or opportunity can widely scattered survey techniques prove useful. Professional polling firms rarely use these techniques.

A second general survey type is a telephone survey, very popular with polling firms for its relatively inexpensive, rapid-result, first-hand contact characteristic. Probably the majority of surveys that call for sample sizes of less than 1,000 are now conducted by telephone.

A major advantage to this method, apart from those prized by polling firms, is the control this strategy allows the researcher in selecting respondents. By carefully analyzing the population characteristics of a given region, and selecting respondents by a variety of methods so as to accurately reflect the universe population (including using the telephone as a preliminary step in finding appropriate respondents), studies with a very small sample size can yield meaningful

data about the total population. The methods used in these screening and selecting activities are extremely technical, and novices should exercise care in employing them without the guidance of an experienced pollster; but the power one gains through telephone surveying methodology is substantial. Please note, however, that an accompanying effort must be included to control for that fraction of the population not available by ordinary telephone contact, and weighting the sample accordingly. Lack of comprehension of this factor led to the confident prediction that Governor Dewey would whip Harry Truman in the 1948 presidential election.

The speed and accessibility afforded by telephone contacting allows for another advantage: filtering. A narrow band of the population who share a common characteristic (or set of characteristics) wanted in a survey can be systematically revealed by filtering out from a larger sample those respondents who, upon being initially asked, report that they lack the characteristic. For example, if a particular survey requires female respondents with at least two years of college but less than four years, who work or have children at home, the sampling design may call for telephone contacts with up to 1,000 households before a subsample of 100 persons with these characteristics is found. The 100 persons then become the research sample who respond to the entire set of questions.

There are, however, certain disadvantages to telephone surveys. One serious disadvantage is being limited to questions that can be answered in rather simple replies and being limited to a small number of questions, since telephone contacts that last beyond a few minutes begin to break down unless a specific appointment is made for a longer interview.

Another disadvantage is that the "blind" telephone sometimes fails to reveal nuances face-to-face interviews show as significant to a respondent's true feelings. In short, it is easy to misinterpret certain replies over the telephone, more difficult over the phone than face to face to assign responses to the response categories defined on an interview schedule.

Other disadvantages are: high cost when the survey covers a wide geographic area; easy biasing of results, since the sample size is likely to be quite small in terms of the universe, through sampling errors in the methodology of respondent selection or through faulty weighting of the data to conform to population characteristics; and regional language differences which can be a barrier to effective communication.

Finally, certain types of studies require respondents to choose one option from a written list preconceived by the researcher. The deeper and more complex the interview, the more it requires careful weighting of conflicting feelings and motives, the less effective the telephone survey technique.

Interview polling by face-to-face question and answer is perhaps the best known method of gathering statistics about a sample of the population. The U.S. census every ten years is a commonly remembered experience for many Americans, both because every household is touched and because so many ordinary citizens are recruited to conduct the survey.

The advantages of face-to-face interview surveying are clear: in depth questions are possible through exchange of cards with printed response choices; respondents are often more honest and careful in their replies when talking face to face than they are in more remote and impersonal survey situations; moreover, lengthy interviews can be conducted by appointment, given lead time and resolute interviewers who are free to return to a sample household on several occasions.

These advantages are more than balanced by the severe cost disadvantage of this method that may impede study directors. Home-appointment interviews are the most expensive way to collect data, for interviewers' time must be covered, as well as travel to the selected points of contact, training expenses for interviewers, and the cost of carefully selecting the towns, neighborhoods, and blocks to produce a sample conforming as closely as possible to the characteristics of the universe population. Moreover, if the population contains several distinct ethnic groups, interviewers need

to be carefully chosen and trained to reduce the social barriers that may limit the effectiveness of the face to face interview technique.

Some educational researchers have found that one way of reducing the cost of an interview survey is to "piggy back" questions onto another survey that has been planned by another group, or to take advantage of a regular survey service that has flat rates to customers who "buy" into the design offered by the service. Care must be exercised in these situations, however, since whether one "piggy backs" or purchases service, the sample size and survey design are not one's own, and may be inappropriate for the educational survey purpose. For example, an existing service may have a set sample size of 1,000 chosen to represent a state with a population of 10 million--not an unlikely sample size if carefully chosen, and may be adequate to reflect the entire state within a sampling error of less than three percent. But if an early question in the survey divides the sample into two or more response streams (sets of questions for subsamples of the respondents), the number of respondents in each stream may be too small to provide meaningful results that can be generalized to the state population.

Finally, a fourth type of survey that is rarely used by researchers is one that involves unobtrusive measures--that is, a methodology that collects data on responses to stimuli in indirect ways. One of the criticisms often heard

of typical surveys that are designed to predict behavior of respondents is that the level of actual response is rarely as high as the data would have one expect. It appears that in some instances respondents are willing to agree with sentiments and opinions they perceive that researchers want to hear, and choose responses accordingly. Overt behavior does not in all cases follow from expressed desire. Critics point to the way people tend to "vote with their feet," show their real feelings and beliefs by the way they act.

If a research question is fairly simple and direct, one can sometimes measure opinion in creative ways that do not involve asking the respondent any questions, but simply involve observing the behavior of a sample of appropriate people in a given situation. It is possible to predict behavior in this way. The rate of viewer response to an educational offering over broadcast television, for example, may be one indicator of the likely future response to an educational program utilizing cable TV instruction. The "trial baloon" and the "stalking horse" are both variations on this methodology, often used in the political arena. Educational researchers with limited means but a creative cast of mind may find a number of instances where unobtrusive measures may be a useful and appropriate survey technique.[14]

The disadvantages of this method are clearly apparent. Usually, research questions are more complex and extensive than can be easily answered in a single test situation, and

rigorous research scientists are apt to scoff at the design. But in the fluid world of policy research, such irregularly derived data, if convincingly drawn from as tightly controlled a situation as can be arranged, will often be sufficient to buttress the arguments of partisans as convincingly as a more conventional survey strategy.

Strengths and weaknesses of survey strategies

The short sketches of types of survey techniques above are not intended to be comprehensive, nor to carry with them all the considerations that must be made when undertaking a serious research design. For that one should either contact a professional polling firm, or an experienced survey research specialist, or consult one or another of the excellent texts on sampling, surveying, and statistical analysis.[15] But the several types of survey methods are suggestive of the techniques which have been used by various research analysts who have conducted studies helpful to planners and policy makers at the state and local levels. Planners have several options: contracting with someone to conduct a comprehensive study as has been done in states such as California, Illinois, Iowa, and Massachusetts; doing one's own study with existing staff or university consultants as has been done in Colorado, Florida, Oregon, and New York; or doing no new data collection, but simply collating and reanalyzing existing data as has been done in Washington and Texas.[16]

The choice lies partly in the available staff and financial resources, and in a judgment about the strategy which is likely to get the most mileage in the political arena of the state or institution.

An advantage of using survey techniques is that a case can often be made for a new service or opportunity that cannot be otherwise supported. Planning cannot take place in a vacuum, and study data, when competently derived and knowledgeably presented, can be a powerful tool (one that may be used by several competing interest groups, we should add).[17]

The requirements of the study and its intended uses usually imply the appropriate type of poll to use. It is important to realize, however, that all choices in survey research involve a trade-off among considerations such as cost, speed, simplicity, scientific accuracy, number and complexity of questions, sample size and composition, or level of research competence. A quick-and-dirty study may seem to be as effective as an elegant and expensive design, but the loss in quality may have some unforeseen consequences: critics can more easily discount the data by devastatingly exposing its shortcomings. Credibility must be maintained if results are to hold up to scrutiny.

Professional polling firms are more likely to generate unimpeachable results (albeit shrouding their methodology somewhat) but often fail to follow through with the needed

help in planning how best to use the information. It is our opinion that in most cases states and institutions which can draw upon their own professional and university staffs or knowledgeable educational consultants for studies of the kind presented here should do so, perhaps contracting for an interview or telephone survey with a polling firm, but maintaining control of the project "in house." In most cases this proves to be the most satisfactory.

The strength, then, of survey research is to enable planners and policy makers to answer basic questions about the need for, probable impact of, and opinions about new educational resources of consequence to a state. Large, representative segments of the population can be queried to reveal their educational needs and demands, as well as to demonstrate their behavior with respect to existing opportunities. With care in design, some very specific questions can be answered, such as: "How many adults in our state are likely to sign up in the first year of an individualized, part-time, home study program leading to the Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree; how much will they spend; how many hours a week can they study; and what supporting services will they need in order to successfully enter and remain in the program?" These questions are typical of those found in institutional studies.

There are, however, weaknesses in relying exclusively on field polls to derive planning data. As we well know from

political polls, opinions within the population change, often quite rapidly, and polls are usually of one-shot design not intended to give an idea of trends or of the rapidity of developments over time. Research on adult learners shows several typical characteristics which need to be taken into account in any planning situation: adults are generally interested in learning which has immediate utility (not for some future reward) and they will have shifting needs and demands year by year. The same person may need vocational skills one year, child development information the next, exposure to the humanities a third, and another vocational subject or personal skill the fourth. Along with each of these felt needs the learner will want information and nondirective guidance, and perhaps financial aid. In all cases he or she will demand to be treated as an adult who has active management over the educational experiences. Thus planners will need to arrange some systematic means of continually monitoring the size of the demand for various learning opportunities. Field polls are perhaps not the most efficient means of accomplishing this task.

A direct field survey of the population ignores the needs for manpower in industries, businesses, and trade unions. The need for skills and abilities for the economic well-being of a state or city may not be perceived by the population in general, and will probably not show up in an inventory of learning needs. Manpower planners'

perspectives on the needs for groups of persons skilled in certain marketable areas are a rich source of data which ought to be taken into account by educational planners.

Moreover, surveys are an inconstant tool with some of the most disadvantaged segments of the population who are not accustomed to polling and may not wish to express true feelings to an interviewer. State surveys in recent years show without a doubt that the generally well off, more highly educated, middle-class respondent is the one interested in more education; the poor, the undereducated, and the underprivileged either do not show up in the data or characteristically express a negative reaction to questions about further education.

Third, field surveys sometimes ignore the strength of resources a state may possess in certain fields of study or at certain levels of education. A state may be justly proud of its fine liberal arts colleges and state universities with nationally known graduate schools, and view with alarm and confusion the poll results that show a great need for training in industrial trades. Do they then dismantle this excellent set of resources to better serve the adult who says he or she does not want the education traditionally provided to the young? How can resources be reallocated, or new sources of support found for this "shifting and inconstant" demand? The problem is a real one, and survey methodology cannot alone find adequate answers to it.

Finally, survey research is a tricky business. Questions which seem perfectly clear to the researcher sometimes prove to be disastrously vague and ambiguous to many respondents. Without either selecting proven questions borrowed from previously successful instruments, or carefully pretesting new questions on a sample of respondents, the researcher runs the considerable danger of confusing, or worse, offending his subjects. These respondents may either reject the whole effort or begin deliberately falsifying replies to "get back" at the offense. In either case, the study may be invalidated.

The business of choosing an approach methodology, selecting a sample, and determining what constitutes an appropriate sample size to yield what level of accuracy is needed for the study are all important questions that must be correctly answered in order for the study to result in maximum pay-off. If the choice rests on going with a locally developed strategy about which there is some question, or bringing in a survey research specialist to put it right, one should not hesitate to bring in the specialist. The added cost will likely be well worth it.

Thus it is clear that there are benefits to be derived from determining educational needs through survey research, but there are also drawbacks. Other efforts will also have to be employed if planners and policy boards are to have sufficient information at their command to plan for the future.

Role of educational brokering agencies*

The second major strategy for uncovering adult learning needs is to use community agencies that work daily with adults seeking further education or alternate opportunities. Although the phenomenon of a community educational counseling and advisement center is not new (The Educational Exchange of Greater Boston has been operating for over seventy years, for example), there has been increasing attention to the experiences of a number of new adult opportunity and advocacy centers called "brokering" agencies, many supported initially by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education and private foundations.

These centers are intermediaries between adult would-be learners and the range of educational resources in a given area. We are not concerned here with institutional counseling services, those advisors who routinely give academic advice to entering or prospective students. Their service is primarily that of fitting the goals and plans of the candidate to a specific institution's resources. That is an important function, but hardly an unbiased one. Rather, the new types of centers are independent of specific academic institutions, and free of the temptation to pre-judge just what might

*Thanks is extended to Francis U. Macy, Director of the National Center for Educational Brokering, Syracuse, N.Y., for the ideas in this and later subsections concerning brokering agencies.

be best for a candidate. Francis Macy, Director of the National Center for Educational Brokering, put it succinctly:

> Educational brokering centers need to be on neutral territory, in an intellectual sense. Advisors shouldn't care whether a client ends up going to a local proprietary institution, or a university, or staying at home learning on his own. If he or she decides that a degree really isn't the goal after all, that is all right. It's questionable to me that an advisor in a degree granting institution can be that neutral.[18]

The growth of these centers in a number of cities and towns, together with some existing state agencies, public libraries with staff specifically trained to give educational counseling, and other social service agencies provide an educational needs monitoring function that may be more sensitive to local needs - particularly among low-income, inner-city residents - than field polling.

In addition, these agencies and their campus-based counterparts may uncover groups of adults who may be reached because of their particular membership affiliations. Because groups may have related needs, sometimes of great magnitude, whole new educational responses may be needed to fulfill them. For example, the College of New Rochelle established a complete baccalaureate program in the liberal arts designed especially for adults at the union headquarters of a major municipal workers union in New York City. Several thousand workers have earned college level credits, and hundreds have

earned degrees through this imaginative program begun because of the happy connection of a union's needs with a willing and flexible college.

The strength of these agencies lies in their ability to uncover chronic barriers to adult participation in educational activities, and provide anecdotal data on subpopulation need trends and frustrations which may be helpful in planning educational programs. The level of detail available to center staff - on missing or superfluous subject matter opportunities, on cost and student convenience comparisons, on the willingness of college staff to make individual exceptions, etc. - is a rare resource that can provide much insight into the anomalies of the local educational system. Their data can be qualitatively useful because their clients bring real problems to them, not theoretical ones.

The weakness, of course, is that brokering centers can not give quantitative data except on those individuals who come to them. Some brokering centers include an aggressive outreach effort to find groups of unserved adults in their communities, and for this reason can discover pockets of poorly served and rarely reached residents as in the New Rochelle example, but most such agencies are passive in the sense that they depend upon people voluntarily contacting them. The reach of brokering agencies is also short, usually limited to several counties.

Thus planning data from brokering agencies can be of limited statistical use to statewide or regional planning authorities, but

extraordinarily helpful in other ways: adding a dimension of human affect to needs analyses, and pinpointing detailed system anomalies within limited regions. Further, as the paper by Henry O'Donnell suggests, groups of residents may be mobilized with the help of brokering agencies to support legislative efforts to provide greater state resources for the adult learner.

Furthermore, if information from brokering agencies is added to state, county or city manpower training analyses revealing skills and specialists needed for industrial and commerical enterprises, a powerful set of facts can be marshalled to support the establishment of new job training programs.

Conclusions from adult learning needs analyses

In January 1976, a conference bringing together the directors of a score of state studies of adult education needs concluded that much is now known about the adult's learning needs, but that a good deal of variation from state to state exists in the detail of the population's characteristics, aspirations, barriers to learning and the like.[20] While the conclusions of that conference are general, there are some clues contained in a comparison of findings of studies which used similar survey instruments. These comparative findings may be helpful to those who have not conducted studies of this kind. In addition, early reported data from community brokering agencies supports and corroborates the survey results.

The basic survey instrument developed by the Educational Testing Service for use in the national adult learning study of 1972 has been adapted for a dozen subsequent state and local studies, including several doctoral theses. Some of the basic questions remained unchanged from study to study, although no state precisely replicated the ETS methodology or instrument.

What are some tentative conclusions that can be drawn from a comparison of findings in these studies and observations made by educational brokers? First and perhaps most important, almost everyone is a learner. Research by Allen Tough and his colleagues concerned with adult continuing education make this very clear indeed.[21] The implication of this body of research is that the kind and intensity of consciously undertaken learning activity is on a continuum from formal, institutionally organized study over a specific period of time (as in an adult evening class) to informal, sporadic, self-initiated investigation over an indeterminate period of time. Just where on this continuum an institution or a system wishes to design a program to intervene is a question of judgement. The evidence clearly indicates that most states and institutions are becoming more flexible and inclusive rather than less so, serving learners further along the continuum than could be reached solely by inflexible, traditional programs.

The various state and national adult learning studies referred to earlier confirm the research findings, but because of the methodological differences in approaching respondents,

vary in specific percentage of adults interested in further learning from a low of 36 percent of the population to a high of over 90 percent.

Second in importance, all studies, as well as data from brokering agencies, reveal that the adult responds to programs that are convenient - in time, place, and environment. According to Macy, "one thing you are going to hear from [educational] brokers, and that is that personal convenience is more important than all kinds of other things, including money."[22] Adults will not participate in numbers in inexpensive, interesting programs if they are arranged inconveniently. One study showed clearly that a sample of adults would consistently choose a third or fourth choice subject for study if arrangements for that subject were more convenient than those for a first choice subject.[23]

Cost is clearly a major barrier to many adults, but according to one interpretation of most of the recent studies, cost is "soft" in the sense that it tends to determine action or inaction only when other inducements are weak. If motivation is strong, and arrangements convenient, a certain cost which presents an apparently insurmountable barrier in other circumstances can be overcome. Personal sacrifice alters the cost barrier significantly, something an economist might call the "elasticity of demand".

This is not to say that cost does not represent a real

impediment to some - of course it does. But there is a group of adults in a middle income gray area for whom cost is a variable barrier.

Another conclusion that is invariably reached is that persons whose previous educational experiences are either extensive or successful are more likely to be interested in further learning. For example, in one major study in Canada, the percentage of the population who are intent upon further learning ran from a low of 18 percent for respondents who had a grade school education or less, to a high of 79 percent for those who had completed a postsecondary educational program.[24] This is a typical finding in state and national learning needs analyses.

Intention to continue learning is also a function of age, though the strength of the relationship is not as strong as with previous education. In the main, younger adults are more likely to be interested in further education - especially for credit and degrees - than older adults. The demand percentage, high among those in their 20's, drops to about a 50 percent level around age 30, remains fairly constant to age 50 or thereabouts, after which it begins to decline arithmetically. At age 70 and beyond, the percent of those interested in further learning becomes quite small, less than 10 percent of the age group.

Finally, those studies which ask the question find that several supporting services are commonly demanded by adult

learners: assessment and acknowledgement of previous learning and experience, educational information and advice, evaluation of work-related knowledge for credit, sources of financial aid, and the like. Serious would-be learners do not relish the thought of being put into introductory courses in subject areas where they have had experience and feel a degree of competence. In Peterson's California study, for example, a series of counseling and assessment centers were recommended on the basis that between 2.6 and 3.0 million Californians would take advantate of such centers, were they in existence.[25]

Beyond these generalizable conclusions, various studies begin to disagree and sometimes contradict one another in detail: why do adults say they want to learn, what ways are most in demand, in what place do adults wish to learn, and what types of recognition (certificates, credits, and degrees) are wanted, etc. Much seems to depend upon the particular population characteristics of the city, region, or state. Is the population relatively young, urban, reasonably well-off, and open to ideas (as, for example, in the San Francisco Bay Area)? Then a high percentage of the population are likely to be interested in subjects for personal growth and satisfaction, at a local community college, for college credit. Is the population older, rural, predominately from farming related occupations, lower-income? Then they will likely be interested in learning marketable skills at home for increased income (in

the case of women), or occupation-related skills for greater self-sufficiency (in the case of men). College credit will probably not be a factor.

Educational brokers located in urban areas with large numbers of poor, minority persons, home-bound housewives, or out-of-work blue collar workers will relate that needs are for inexpensive opportunities designed for rapid skill or credential acquisition, directly related to getting jobs. Learning can take place either at home or at an easily accessible near-by learning center. Counseling is needed to relieve many would-be learners of guilt associated with taking scarce family dollars and time away from spouse and children. Supporting services are needed to keep people in programs, and so forth. Brokers have perhaps the clearest impression of the usefulness of various educational opportunities for whole groups of disenfranchised people.

Recognition of the educational resources of one's home region seems to be a variable that often accounts for the place and means of learning for which adults indicate a preference. Those who know of no open door institution serving adults in their region or city are likely to report a "preference" for correspondence, TV, or library-based instruction. Those who know of a near-by extension center or community college will more than likely "prefer" learning there. In short, survey or other data collection procedures tend to find rather sharp differences on the majority of preferential questions which

depart from rather broad, basic educational needs. Educational planners must be sensitive to these varying responses, and allow for the fact that "missing" resources can be as powerful a determinant of community learning needs as existing resources.

Summary

Clearly, then, survey research can be of assistance to states which are confused about their institutional roles in the future, and to planners whose job it is to help design academic programs for the nontraditional learner. This new learner is not easy to serve. He requires flexibility, support, understanding, and freedom to make his own choices about what is best for him. Programs involving strict degree requirements which ignore what adults bring with them in terms of understanding and experience, and which force conformity to artificial restrictions which young learners tolerate, will not attract mature learners. Their needs require a rethinking of the purposes and structures expressed in the teaching-learning assumptions of the past. Adults do not ask for a lowering of academic standards, merely that the standards which are applied be appropriate to the purposes and the goals of the particular learning situation.

Two caveats are worth repeating. Survey research design and methodology have come a long way since the days of hurry-up-and-work-up-some-questions, slap-dash approach often used

by inexperienced persons. Questionnaire design is an art and a science in itself, and when used in a carefully developed strategy can yield useful, reliable results. Sloppy work in developing either one will lead only to embarrassment: garbage in--garbage out.

The second is that survey results can give only some of the information planners will need to develop programs in the future. Surveys miss an array of important opportunities, for they do not provide the level of detail nor reveal the range of significant and relevant facts without which planners can make mistakes. At this point, community agencies, educational brokers, businesses and unions can provide critical missing information. But survey research is one tool that has proved useful in the uncertain situation in which many states and institutions find themselves.

Footnotes

[1]"Part-Timers Played Large Role in Enrollment Increase," National Center for Educational Statistics Report. Reported in Higher Education Daily (December 6, 1975). pp. 3-4.

[2]National Advisory Council on Extension and Continuing Education, Equity of Access: Continuing Education and the Part-Time Student, 9th Annual Report (Washington, D.C.: NACECE, March 21, 1975).

[3]There are a number of directories of new programs and services, none of which is entirely satisfactory. A sample includes: Cornell Center for Improvement in Undergraduate Education, The Yellow Pages of Undergraduate Innovations (New Rochelle, NY: Change Magazine, 1974); Wayne Blaze et al., Guide to Alternative Colleges and Universities (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974); John Bear, College Degrees by Mail: A Comprehensive Guide to Non-traditional Degree Programs (Little River, CA: Rafton and Bear, August 1976); Jennifer Eis and Don Ward, Taking Off (East Lansing, MI: Center for Alternatives In/To Higher Education, 1975); J. R. Rader and M. A. Huber, eds. Innovative Graduate Programs Directory (Saratoga Springs, NY: Empire State College, 1976); Sarah Splaver, Non-traditional College Routes to Careers (New York: Julian Messner, 1975); Wilbur Cross, The Weekend Education Source Book (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1976.); 1975-6 Guide to External and Continuing Education (Moravia, NY: Chronicle Guidance Publications, Inc., 1976); and Linda Gordon and Judy Schub, eds., On-Campus/Off-Campus Degree Programs for Part-Time Students (Washington, DC: National University Extension Association, 1976). An excellent set of continually updated guides and directories developed by the military are available through the Education Officers on all military bases and at Servicemen's Opportunity College participating institutions, entitled, DANTES Independent Study Catalogue, Vols. I and II. (June 1976).

[4]Lyman A. Glenny, The 1960s in Reverse, A Constricting Crisis for Higher Education (Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, 1973), mimeo.

[5]Data from U.S. Census Bureau cited by Lyman A. Glenny in "The Changing Milieu of Postsecondary Education--A Challenge to Planners." Keynote address delivered to the National Higher Education Management Seminar, October 16, 1972.

[6]There are many local and regional studies of the plans of high school seniors. By far the most ambitious national study which involved much more than simply college study plans was Thomas L. Hilton, The Base-year Survey of the National Longitudial Study of the High School Class of 1972. National Center for Educational Statistics and the Educational Testing Service (1973).

[7]U.S. Office of Education, Participation in Adult Education (1959), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962).

[8]John W. C. Johnstone and Ramon J. Rivera, Volunteers for Learning. (Chicago: Aldine Publications, 1965).

[9]John R. Valley, "Diversity Plus ?," The College Board Review, No. 96 (Summer 1975). Available gratis as a reprint from the Office of New Degree Programs.

[10]Imogene Oaks, ed., Participation in Adult Education: Final Report, 1969. National Center for Educational Statistics, Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974).

[11]Imogene Oaks and Loyal Greener, eds., Participation in Adult Education, 1972. National Center For Educational Statistics, Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975).

[12]The survey is reported in K. Patricia Cross, John R. Valley and Associates, Planning Nontraditional Programs: An Analysis of the Issues for Postsecondary Education. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974).

[13]Based upon unpublished material available from the Postsecondary Education Convening Authority (Kenneth Fischer, Director), Institute for Educational Leadership, Suite 310, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. This material was gathered at a conference of directors of state studies of adult education, held at Clearwater, Florida, January 26-28, 1976. Materials include "Bibliography of Ad Hoc Library," and a list of participants who are in the process of completing state studies. This list includes notations about the state studies in Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere.

[14]Eugene J. Webb et al., Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).

[15]There are a number of excellent texts on survey methodology. Perhaps the classic in the field is Frederick F. Stephan and Philip J. McCarthy, Sampling Opinions: An Analysis of Survey Procedures. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958).

[16]Cf. unpublished material available from the Institute for Educational Leadership, referred to in footnote 13.

[17]Cf. "Discussion Notes: The Collected Wisdom of the Newsprint Sheets," another unpublished set of materials from the Institute for Educational Leadership, referred to in footnote 13.

[18]From a talk given at the conference, "Nontraditional Education: Issues for Statewide Participation." Harvard Graduate School of Education, May 17, 1976.

[19]For an on-going discussion of the role and functions of brokering agencies, see Bulletin, National Center for Educational Brokering (405 Oak Street, Syracuse, N.Y. 13203), esp. Vol. 1 Nos. 4 and 5 (April and May, 1976).

[20]Cf. "A Synthesis of the Clearwater Conference for Directors of State Studies in Adult Education," by James M. Heffernan. Available from the Institute for Educational Leadership, referred to in footnote 13.

[21]Allen M. Tough, The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning (Toronto: Research in Education Series No. 1, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1971). See also: Patricia M. Coolican, Self-Planned Learning: Implications for the future of Adult Education. Working Draft - 7402. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Educational Policy Research Center, April, 1974) mimeo; and dissertations by the following: Laurent Denys, The Major Learning Efforts of Two Groups of Accra Adults (University of Toronto, 1973); James Fair, Teachers vs Learners (University of Toronto, 1973); Will Johns, Jr. Selected Characteristics of the Learning Projects Pursued by Practicing Pharmacists (University of Georgia, 1973); Edwin A. Johnson, Selected Characteristics of the Learning Projects of Adults... (University of Georgia, 1973); Ann Litchfield, The Nature and Pattern of Participation in Adult Education Activities (University of Chicago, 1965); and Cressy McCatty, Patterns of Learning Projects Among Professional Men (University of Toronto, 1973).

[22]Cf. footnote 18.

[23] I. Bruce Hamilton, The Third Century, Postsecondary Planning for the Nontraditional Learner. (Princeton, N.J.: Office of New Degree Programs, Educational Testing Service, 1976), p. 59-60.

[24] Ignacy Waniewicz, Demand for Part-Time Learning in Ontario. (Toronto, Canada: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1976), p. 25.

[25] Hefferlin, Peterson, and Roelfs, California's Need for Postsecondary Alternatives. First Technical Report (Part One). (Sacramento: Assembly Publication Office, 1975), p. 64. See also Peterson, Hefferlin, et al., Postsecondary Alternatives to Meet the Educational Needs of California's Adults (Final Report). (Sacramento: Assembly Publication Office, 1975.) Five additional technical reports of this major state study are also available.

SYNTHESIZING NEEDS AND RESOURCES

The Role of the State Coordinating Agency

Patrick M. Callan

The issue addressed here is the role of the state agency responsible for state higher/postsecondary education planning in meeting needs for new educational services. From the perspective of the state coordinating agency, this issue cannot be dealt with in isolation but must be examined in the context of the overall mission of these agencies, and the conditions and thrust of statewide planning, in the mid-1970's. This paper will turn first to these matters and then to some of the specific issues which must be addressed with respect to assessed learning needs. Finally, one model for delivery of some new educational services through an essentially regional approach, a model which has emerged as part of the comprehensive planning activities of the State of Washington, will be discussed.

Responsibility of the State Coordinating Agency

Assuming for the moment that need for new educational services is established, what is the role of the state planning/

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coordinating agency in developing public policy which is responsive to those needs? What is the role of statewide planning in assuring that new educational needs are met?

State higher or postsecondary education agencies are generally neither providers of educational services nor direct participants in those aspects of the political process which allocate public resources to the various services funded by state governments--common schools, human services, health services, transportation, natural resources, higher education, etc. Yet these agencies have important relationships to both of those processes. The statutes under which most agencies operate contain language similar to the charge to the Washington Council for Postsecondary Education. The Council is to "Engage in overall planning for postsecondary education in the state," and is to

> Assess and define the educational needs of the state to be served by postsecondary education; recommend and coordinate studies to ascertain how defined needs are being met; study and make recommendations concerning adult education, continuing education, public service and post-secondary educational programs; identify priorities among defined needs and specify the resources necessary to meet them....1

Thus the task of synthesizing the disparate preceptions of the learning needs of the state, allocating institutional responsibility and identifying resources necessary to meet needs is the basic responsibility of the state higher/postsecondary education agencies. It applies to both traditional and non-traditional needs, although throughout their relatively brief history, most agencies have been preoccupied with planning to meet the enrollment demands of conventional college

age students in the 1960's. While the state response to needs for new services is part of an agency's responsibility and concern, it must look at these needs within the broader context of all the needs for education beyond high school. And, recall that the statute cited above called upon us to "identify priorities among defined needs," implying that some needs must take precedence over others. It is important, therefore, before focusing specifically on the provision of new services, to begin with some discussion of the environment in which public policy for higher/postsecondary education is being developed and the impact of this environment upon the planning being done in many of the states.

The Context of Current State Planning Activities

Most of the statewide planning and coordination which has taken place in this country has occurred since 1960 and has been oriented to meeting the demands of an era of dramatic growth of enrollments in the 18-21 year old age group. In fact, while the origins of state coordination go back about thirty-five years, most coordinating agencies were established during the period of the most rapid growth in the history of American higher education. In 1940 there were two coordinating boards in the United States; there were three in 1950; eleven in 1960; and twenty-seven by 1970.[2]

The fact that state coordination and planning proliferated during a time of growth is obviously no coicidence. As a rule, coordinating boards were charged either explicitly or implicitly with assisting state governments in assimilating this growth in an orderly and efficient manner. Planning was a matter of developing

rational policies for dividing up an ever-expanding pool of students and resources. Accordingly, state master plans produced by these agencies tended to be blueprints for expansion. Viewed from this perspective, state planning was a response to a particular set of problems and issues in a particular era, orchestrating expansion during a period of unprecedented growth of students and resources.

As we are now painfully aware, the agenda has altered drastically. If planning was once concerned with the rationalization of growth, it now centers on the allocation of scarcity. We are all familiar with the factors which have produced this inversion: declining participation rates among the traditional clientele, the high school senior, to be followed shortly by a shrinkage in the absolute size of the pool; inflation; increasingly constrained state budgets; and a levelling off and even decline in the portion of public funds allocated to postsecondary education in many states, the latter reflecting a shift of state emphasis from higher education to other societal needs. There are no indications that any of these trends are likely to be reversed in the near future.[3]

The new planning environment is, therefore, oriented to retrenchment rather than to expansion. Many state planners have concluded that political, fiscal and demographic realities are such that new programs and services will be provided only at the expense of current activities--whether one is talking about conventional degree programs or new types of learning services. Reallocation through more frequent and intensive reviews of programs is a major theme of several of the state promulgated in the last year or two.

Few of us really need to be reminded that this type of planning, even when done well, results in defensiveness on the part of institutions of higher education. This is not the kind of environment in which new ideas are easily introduced or accepted. Institutions fight desperately to hold on to what they have--in faculty, dollars and programs. All change is perceived as threatening. And because the proportion of resources allotted to postsecondary education is stabilizing, institutions resist not only changes in their own roles but the creation of new services anywhere in the system because of the potential competition for resources or students.

Such responses to new needs that do occur tend to have two characteristics:

--They are perceived by the institutions as means to maintain faculty, dollars or programs which would otherwise be jeopardized.

--They involve the provision of a conventional service in a conventional way with some minor modification--such as the offering of a class at a time or place more convenient to potential students; but the class is taught in the same manner as before, usually the conventional lecture method.

Avoiding duplication and inefficiency in meeting needs for new services is becoming a crucial planning issue. Some coordinating agencies are coming under a great deal of pressure from governors and legislatures to assure orderly development of new programs and services and to see that such development takes place in response to legitimate, carefully prioritized public needs. We are familiar with the widespread suspicion that interest in providing new services is merely a response to the prospect of declining enrollments. However, the planning issue should not focus on

the motivations of individuals or institutions; rather it should center on demonstrable public needs and the most responsible ways of meeting them.

Planning Issues

It was indicated above that the assessment and response to educational needs is a primary responsibility of state planners and that the emphasis of state plans has shifted from meeting needs through augmented resources to meet new needs through reallocation. State planning in a time of scarce dollars is concerned with meeting needs in the most efficient manner. Let us turn to some issues which state plans must address in relation to servicing new clienteles at new times and places and utilizing new strategies and technologies for learning, evaluation and certification.

First, the nature and magnitude of needs must be clearly identified. This means that needs assessments must be precise in the identification of programmatic needs, the populations to be served and the resources required. The recent Postsecondary Alternatives study commissioned by the California Legislature provides some examples of the types of documentation required. The study found demonstrable needs in seven areas:

--help to individuals in locating appropriate educational opportunities;

--individual counseling and career planning;

--equity for part-time students;

--programs for groups with special needs such as

those who are elderly, handicapped, unemployed, ethnic minorities, high school dropouts, poor, institutionalized, and women returning after an absence from education;

--more "external" upper-division programs;

--individualized degree opportunities; and

--certification of competence without instruction.[4]

Second, the approach to meeting the established need should be specified. The crucial question here is often whether to utilize established institutions and agencies or to create new organizational mechanisms, or to utilize some combination of the old and the new. This is also the most difficult political issue. State plans in Montana and Washington have stressed the need to make existing institutions more responsive to new needs, often through inter-institutional cooperation. The California studies have called for some reform of existing institutions and policies as well as the creation of new entities to meet the needs cited above.[5] It is possible that the prospect of a new institution intensifies pressures on existing institutions to demonstrate their capability to be responsive.

Third, the issue of funding must be addressed. Who should pay and how much? How much state support? How much client or user support? Should state subsidies for such programs be greater or less than subsidies provided the users of the older conventional systems? Are the budgetary mechanisms--primarily formulas--currently in use adaptable to the new services? What modifications will be required?

Fourth, how and when will the new services be evaluated? Who

will be responsible for evaluation? What criteria will be utilized? At a time when all programs and program proposals are coming under rigorous scrutiny, it would be unrealistic to assume that the newer, less traditional activities will be exempt just because they are new.

The appropriate response to each of these and to the many related issues will vary with each state, with the needs of its population, and with its historical and institutional patterns. Anyone who has been extensively involved in postsecondary planning can testify that there are not many readily exportable models. Yet it is clear that state planning is the appropriate mechanism for the identification and legitimization of new needs and for the formulation of strategies to meet those needs. State planning is also the most useful vehicle for proposing processes and criteria for reallocation among programs and institutions. The purpose of state planning is to offer a conceptual and institutional framework within which state educational goals can be achieved. While such planning is not sufficient to assure the achievement of all goals, it is certainly a necessary first step.

The Washington State Approach

Bearing in mind the scarcity of exportable models, the case of the State of Washington as its planning commission developed the first comprehensive state plan might be instructive. This may be useful not because Washington found the ultimate solutions, even for its problems, but because the process illustrates the ways in which the issues this publication addresses overlap with other planning issues. It involves both state and regional intrastate planning and

coordination, and both traditional and non-traditional concerns.

The Washington State system of higher education includes 27 community colleges, whose districts encompass the state, four state colleges, and two state universities, as well as 12 regionally-accredited private colleges and universities, a growing number of non-accredited indigenous educational enterprises as well as branch campuses of institutions accredited elsewhere, and a substantial array of proprietary schools. From the multitude of concerns, several emerge as imminent items on the state planning agenda:

--identifying and meeting educational needs

--finding a role for the regional state colleges

--coordination

Within this environment we have suggested that the two state universities focus on meeting needs for advanced professional continuing education (Medicine, Law, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, etc.) and for providing off-campus television instruction, largely because of the presence of such resources at these institutions.

The primary public responsibility for general upper-division and graduate off-campus instruction should be that of the state colleges, which, especially for those purposes, should be described as regional institutions. Their primary service areas can be described by the area from which they draw the bulk of their enrollments. In all four cases, these institutions draw about 70 percent of their on-campus enrollments from their immediate region. The entire state can be dissected into these regions.

Further, within these regions community college district boundaries can be made to correspond. And, in its primary service area, each state college should assume primary responsibility for meeting the educational needs fitting within its curriculum and resources.

The statewide agency assumes responsibility for reviewing off-campus programs to ensure that this pattern prevails. The statewide agency also identifies the appropriate institution with existing resources to meet an off-campus need outside the purview of the resident institution. This might involve a more stringent review role for the statewide agency in the off-campus area than is the case with on-campus programs.

Regional state colleges would not generally offer lower-division courses and programs in the off-campus reaches of its region, in that this is the role of the community college; however, the resident senior institutions should work closely, under statewide agency auspices, with the community college to assure facile articulation of programs. This might extend to the resident senior institution offering upper-division programs (leading to a baccalaureate) on the community college campus or in conjunction with a lower-division community college program.

The statewide agency also has a responsibility with respect to the market area of accredited private colleges and universities. The statewide board can perform the role of ensuring that students attending off-campus programs in such areas are students who otherwise could not avail themselves of the private institutions' programs. This might entail requirements that public programs not duplicate those in the private institution, or clearances

with the private institution, or, perhaps a form of cooperative arrangement involving leasing or contracting of private institution resources and facilities.

Stimulation and Constraint

It is clear to all agency planners that they lack the resources to do all that they want to do, if they expect to do some things well. The statewide coordinating/planning agency is often in the best position to make decisions on either an advisory or binding basis as to where the limited funds are to be directed: to certain conventional programs, to off-campus programs, to new approaches, etc. Often it is their responsibility to say of many good ideas, "This seems like a fine thing but we cannot do it right now." Another negative function is to decide to let certain things die without assistance. Yet they are also in a position to recommend positive shifts of resources in response to public needs, and have greater freedom to do so than separate institutions with their established programs, growing proportions of tenured faculty, etc.

Earlier it was indicated that institutional responses to new needs usually involve attempts to accommodate those needs through conventional modes with minor modifications. If one object is to achieve greater institutional responsiveness, as is the plan in Washington, agency heads must learn more about the process of stimulating institutional responsiveness which focuses on learner needs rather than institutional needs. One way is to stimulate experimentation through encouragement of funds as incentives to

Footnotes

[1]Revised Code of Washington RCW 28B.80.030.

[2]Robert O. Berdahl, "Problems in Evaluating Statewide Boards," New Directions for Institutional Research, No. 5 (Spring, 1975).

[3]These trends are discussed in depth in several places, including, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, More Than Survival (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975), pp. 39-49, 130, 133. Lyman A. Glenny, "The Illusions of Steady State," Change, 10 (Winter, 1974-75). T. Edward Hollander, "Planning for Changing Demographic Trends in Public and Private Institutions in New York State" (mimeo, 1975).

[4]Richard E. Peterson and JB Lon Hefferlin, Postsecondary Alternatives to Meet the Educational Needs of California's Adults (Sacramento, 1975).

[5]Final Report of the Montana Commission on Postsecondary Education (Helena, 1974); Report of the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education (Sacramento, 1975); Planning and Policy Recommendations for Washington Postsecondary Education (Olympia, 1976); Peterson and Hefferlin, Postsecondary Alternatives (Sacramento, 1975).

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND POLITICS

The Example of One Education Law in Massachusetts

Henry J. O'Donnell III

As Vice Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Committee on Education, I was often asked what changes might take place in the next few years in the relationship between politics and education. My answer was then and still is now that education will become increasingly politicized as far ahead as one can see. This increasing role of politics in education is not hard to predict. This paper will discuss the role of politics in education, especially educational policy and planning, and what can be learned from the example of the political struggle over one educational law.

Introduction

Local community conflicts over education have intensified, state legislatures have bitterly divided over both funds for education as well as other educational issues, Congress spends more and more time each legislative session debating education issues, and the mass media--newspapers, magazines, radio and TV--

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devote more and more of their time and space to educational issues. Why?

The reasons are not difficult to explain, but the probable consequences are difficult to foresee. Yet it is vital to the future of our society--vital because of the role which we have assigned to education--that these consequences be examined and judged. Most of the goals of our society are assumed to be dependent on the quality of education which society provides. The interrelationship between politics and education becomes, therefore, a vital issue because of its possible influence not only on the quality of education but on the quality of society as well.

The most serious problem confronting the nation today is, in my opion, not inflation or the energy shortage or dwindling resources or the danger of war in the Middle East. The most serious problem right now is that American people are psychologically depleted, not primed for innovation.

Nothing would be more fatuous than to suppose that social problems have easy answers, or that a Pollyanna attitude is all that is necessary for resolving them. The evidence is strong--not just in this country but throughout a large part of the world--that human society is in a state of growing confusion. Life appears no longer the highest value. Sensitivity to suffering and to indignity is being dulled. People adjust too easily to brutality and violence. Poverty no longer ignites general resentment. The need for social justice fails to

galvanize. As a people we seem moving toward concern only for one's self.

Where does new hope begin? I believe it is possible that hope in America begins with a restoration of confidence--confidence of the American people in themselves, their government, their institutions, and their future.

Restoration of confidence is possible. But if a society hopes to restore confidence, it will have to be in a hospitable environment for creative men and women. It will also have to produce men and women with the capacity for self-renewal. John Gardner once wrote that renewal--of societies or of individuals--depends in some measure on motivation commitment, conviction, the values people live by, the things that give meaning to their lives. What we don't have, but can regain, is confidence in ourselves, in our history, in our educational system, and in the ultimate power of ideas.

Education and the Public Sector

Education is by far the largest consumer of public resources in the state and local parts of our governmental system. Over the years, the public has again and again reaffirmed its belief in the significance and importance of education. But there is growing evidence that the honeymoon is coming to an end. More and more questions are being asked about the effectiveness of the use being made of these increased resources. This year state legislatures will take a second, and then a third, look

at educational expenditures. Although education fares better than most other functions, this year's experience may indicate education's political muscle is not as persuasive as it once was.

This increasing political difficulty in which education finds itself is related to the new politics surrounding this function. For many years there was near solidarity among the educationally-oriented groups in American society. State education departments, school and college board members, administrators, teachers, and educationally interested lay groups presented a united front to their state's policymakers. Although internal differences were often compromised, there was a commonality of interest based on the rural orientation of these groups. Further, state legislatures normally possessed this same orientation. And at the time, we were in a high growth phase.

City school systems tended to stand apart from this coalition, largely because they possessed skilled school bureaucracies of their own, and even more important, the financial resources adequate to prevent heavy reliance on state support.

All of this has now changed. Not only have urban school systems found it necessary to turn more and more to state government for support, but in addition many members of the old coalition now find their interests in conflict. Faculty are unionizing; school and college administrators are increasingly aligning themselves with the particular education problems of their area--be it rural, urban, suburban, or statewide--which often puts them in conflict with their colleagues in other areas.

The same kind of division is occurring among state and local planning board members and educationally-affiliated community groups.

Out of this breakdown, new coalitions are being formed, and some educational groups are reaching beyond the traditional bounds of education to find new allies. Faculty increasingly look to other public employees, or to the organized labor movement for support. Community colleges, state institutions, private colleges, and other former colleagues increasingly find themselves in fierce competition for the state's educational dollar, and build coalitions with community groups, business firms, and other municipal and state pressure groups to serve their own ends. State planning and coordinating boards find common ground increasingly difficult to find, and shy away from testing controversial new ideas head on with one or another of the segments.

New Actors in Educational Policies

All of these changes mean that education is now near the center of state and national policies. Many of the great issues which will be debated in this country over the next few decades will clearly be education issues. Not only will it be a question of the quality of resources devoted to education, but how those resources are divided among different kinds of interests, different claiments for services. Not only will it be a matter of the relative roles of state education departments and local

school boards, state planning agencies and institutional prerogatives, but increasingly the extent to which public groups may be directly involved in the administration of the education function.

As these changes are demanded, the demands will be made not only to school and college boards, local governments, legislatures and governors, congress and the President, but to the court system as well.

The Politics of Resource Allocation

Federal politics are generally very different from state-local politics. There are a variety of explanations for the difference between state-local and federal politics, but perhaps most significant is the fiscal bind in which state and local governments find themselves. The result is that state-local politics tend to be tax politics, while federal politics are more nearly program politics.

Alongside the interests demanding increased resources will be the tax conscious groups attempting to hold the line. These interests at the moment hold a strong position in American politics. Their influence has been demonstrated during the past two years in state legislatures. Because of their strength it seems likely that the increase in resources allocated to education will be slowed, and that states may be increasingly involved in the program politics of priorities hitherto characterized by the federal interest.

Educators and the Public

As professional people, educators have been guilty of not communicating to the public just what it is they are trying to do and how they try to do it. They are very slow to point their collective fingers at themselves and indicate where they have been remiss or where improvements must be made. Educators have been irresponsible in that they have not taken the lead in seeing that bad educational conditions are improved. They have not pressed for the good of teaching and as a result a vacuum has been created.

The public is increasingly heard in this vacuum. They have been told that in a democratic society the people govern themselves. The new voices are taking their teachings seriously and are asking for the opportunity to make some decisions about the process of education and the reallocation of resources.

The educators on the other hand have controlled education to the present in this country. The control has been authoritarian. The resources utilized for planning have been both parochial and provincial. Greater effort has been expended to prove the correctness of the decisions than has gone into finding better solutions. It is partly because of this historical conflict that state education planning commissions were founded in the late 1960's and early 1970's, to take some of the heat from both sides of the struggle.

Decision Making

A decision can be defined as a conscious choice from among a well-defined set of often competing alternatives. Decision making is a sequential process culminating in a single decision or a series of decisions which stimulate moves or actions. The output of the decisional process is rules or policies (legislation) to guide subsequent behavior. Policy is not made once and for all; it is made and remade endlessly. Policy making is a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives in which what is desired itself continues to change under reconsideration.

Making policy is at best a very rough process. Neither social scientists, nor politicians, nor public administrators yet know enough about the social world to avoid repeated error in predicting the consequences of policy moves. A wise policy-maker consequently expects that his policies will achieve only part of what he hopes and at the same time will produce unanticipated consequences he would have preferred to avoid. If, however, he proceeds through a succession of incremental changes, he avoids serious lasting mistakes.

The Analysis of Decision Making

The analysis of decision making contains many contradictions even when such analysis is undertaken by experts. Yet all experts seem to agree that decision making in a democratic society is usually far more complex than decision making in an authoritarian society. The authoritarian leader generally

places no emphasis or import on the values, beliefs, feelings of the people he leads. Authoritarianism leads not only to the destruction of autonomy but to the inability to make decisions when conditions change, especially when alternatives are introduced.

Decisions in a democratic society involve much travail and much messiness. They can move in one direction at one time and in another direction at a later time. But the rise in ambiguity, as far as the decision making process is concerned, enables the individual to perceive his world in a richer and more empathic fashion. Although more time is needed to tap ideas and opinions and the interaction sometimes is difficult and complex, each participant can evolve in terms of himself and obtain greater insight.

Plan for Political Support

Looking at learning needs, either expressed by potential learners or forecasted by manpower analysts, and reviewing resources, no matter how logical and straightforward, can lead to no useful result without strong political support from one or more influential sources. Either a governor, a legislature, a politically minded state executive education officer, or a strong grass roots, community-based demand must be present for a plan to work, particularly one that will redirect monies to new enterprises or one that requires new fiscal support. The political game is at least as important as the previous types of studies if results are the criterion

of success. There are certain strategies that maximize the changes of action for a plan; these strategies may differ state by state, or system by system, or from institution to institution, but a point must be made to plan for political support early on.

Educational Policy Making

Two discernable trends developing contemporaneously, the increasing cost of educating people and the centralization of decision making in state planning and legislative bodies, indicate that a study of state-level educational policy making is important. The first trend, increasing cost of educating people, is largely a consequence of the United States' belief in the value of education. This has resulted in more people going to school, staying longer periods and requiring ever-more sophisticated and specialized formal training with more expensive personnel and materials. Education, vital in a technological society such as ours, is now within the reach of an increasingly greater number of people. With the greater involvement of more people, new critic groups have been formed to monitor the process of education and make their demands known to educators.

The second trend, that of centralization of decision making in state legislative bodies, has accelerated in the past decade (1965-1975). Responsibility for education has long been accepted as a state function, but until recently in many states the actual level of support for education has remained

quite low. Today many states are interpreting their responsibility for education more broadly.

As the states reasses their support of public education, educational interest groups (i.e. administrators, college and university boards, faculty organizations, and various education-related citizens' organizations) increase their state-level activities. These groups clamor for education's "fair share" of state resources. At the same time, many state legislatures and executives have lately begun to reshape their roles in educational policy making, moving from passive reaction to active participation. They are increasingly taking on specialized staff personnel who scrutinize legislative requests and occasionally develop original legislative proposals. Such concern for the policy-making initiative, is beginning to be felt in many states.

Educational Interest Groups

Educational interest groups in the past have generally been able to impress state legislative bodies of the special nature of education. Today, for several reasons, they find significant resistance to their demands. First, it is becoming increasingly difficult for educational interest groups to work together. Those states which have witnessed close working relationships among these groups in the past, are today witnessing disintegration of coalitions. This is largely related to the increasing tempo of faculty militancy which is drawing boards of trustees and administrator groups apart.

Second, the increasing role of state governments in an ever-broadening definition of public responsibility for "soft areas" such as medical care, unemployment insurance and other social welfare programs is bound to have an effect upon the support of education. There is continually increasing competition for the public dollar, requiring educators to devise new tactics at the state level to achieve their "rightful" share of that dollar. Due to both factors the splintering of the educational interest groups, and the increasing demands for the public dollar, many state legislative bodies have taken the initiative in educational policy formulation.

Unfortunately for those hoping to receive increased support from legislatures and governors for educational programs aimed at the working adult, there are few powerful public leaders and pressure groups vocal enough to gain the attention and assistance of political leaders. Without this felt demand, and with a luke warm interest among faculty and college administrators, efforts to pursuade legislators to increase expenditure for new institutions by state planning agencies are likely to go unheeded. The following example may serve to illustrate this complexity of the public policy process involved in successful efforts.

In 1972 the Massachusetts Legislature passed a comprehensive special education law, which provided a mechanism for identifying and evaluating children with special needs in the Commonwealth and placing them in appropriate educational programs.

The Massachusetts Special Education Act is a landmark piece of legislation that has been the focus of considerable national attention since its initial drafting and passage in 1972. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act recently passed by Congress is in many ways based on the Massachusetts law. At a recent meeting held in Washington, D.C., to consider methods of implementing the new federal legislation, the Massachusetts law was cited as the model which the federal government should use to begin its implementation process on a national scale.

The Politics of the Special Education Law in Massachusetts: an Example

In Massachusetts alone, there have been estimates of as many as tens of thousands of children with special needs in no program at all, in programs which did not attend to their special needs or in programs which were really just shelves and closets where such children could be stored. (This is analagous to the estimates of adult learning needs not now being well served.) Such estimates were not far from the mark. That we could not identify with greater accuracy the number of children badly served was one of the symptoms of our crisis. Knowing we were failing to serve these children adequately, we had preferred not to know the extent of neglect.

But these problems are not unique to Massachusetts. On the contrary, the situation of children with special needs in

this state is typical of the country. What is unique in Massachusetts is the degree of change now under way. The last few years have initiated new directions in laws and attitudes that many signal hope for children with special needs across the nation. So, too, with out present attitudes toward adult programs. Other states are already looking to Massachusetts as a model because of new special education laws enacted in 1972 and because of the strength of a statewise coalition built to win passage of those laws.

The Special Education Act of 1972 has united the Massachusetts Legislature with a nationwide movement on behalf of handicapped children. Building on themes suggested in various court decisions and articulated by national parent and professional organizations, it declares as its policy a commitment "to provide an adequate, publicly supported education to every child resident in the Commonwealth." Such education is to include "a flexible and non-discriminatory system for identifying and evaluating the individual needs" of children with special needs with thorough periodic evaluations to ensure that "a program which holds out the promise of being special actually benefits the children assigned thereto." A similar landmark piece of legislation could evolve from the present unrest over adult continuing education.

The Problem in 1970

The legislation developed as a response to a system of

statutes which could only be described as well-intended chaos. Laws pertaining to special education were scattered through several chapters and were full of disparities such as unequal provisions for handicapped children built through a history of legislative patchwork.

At the root of these disparate provisions was the use of several labels, instead of a single category broad enough in definition and flexible enough in provisions to address the whole spectrum of special needs. Each of the sections relating to handicapped children focused on a single category such as "blind," "deaf," "mentally retarded" or "emotionally disturbed," and each carried its own singular provisions.

In some cases where there were enough children classified together, a town was required to establish a special program for them; in others a town was merely permitted to establish such a program. In some cases, 100 percent of the cost of a program would be reimbursed by the state, in others only 50 percent. In some cases, a child could be sent to an institution within or without the Commonwealth at state expense; in others, such an option was not permitted. Moreover, some types of handicaps were not recognized in the law at all.

Each of these sections for handicapped children reflected in its provisions the contingencies of the year in which it became law. A provision for children with learning disabilities, for example, permitted but did not require a town to set up programs because there were so few teachers trained to deal

with learning disabilities in the mid 1960's when the act was passed. To fill the void where such programs were not developed, a companion section was enacted to have the state pay for a learning disabled child to attend any school, public or private, in the Commonwealth which offered remedial services. Such provisions for the use of private and public institutions at state expense, when a child's place of residence fails to provide appropriate programs, characterized most sections dealing with special needs.

The Legislature's tendency to depend on institutions outside of the home town rather than to mandate the development of programs in the public school systems is not difficult to understand. The process leading to this dependence usually begins with the impotence of parents of handicapped children in affecting the actions of their schools. Too few in number in a single town to put effective pressure on a school committee, they can, and did however, organize across regions to provoke the development of private institutions to meet their needs. Since these institutions require a reliable financial base to remain alive, such a group then combined with similar groups to ask that the state create that base.

Faced with the constitutional responsibility to see to the education of all its children, but strapped by the lack of programs in public school systems, a legislature has few alternatives other than to provide tuition payments for children attending such a school. In Massachusetts the process

usually halted there, short of requiring the development of adequate special programs in the school systems where the children reside.

Unfortunate Results

Emerging from this pattern were three particularly unfortunate consequences. First, there were many children who had been left with no program at all. They sat at home either because their type of need was not recognized in the laws and there was no money available for their programs, or because a shortage of facilities and programs placed them on a waiting list. Further, there were some children who were simply denied admission to an institution because their need was too severe. Rather than attempt to develop programs for such children, an institution will often work only with those it knows it can help.

Second, our dependence on residential facilities outside the childrens' home towns has institutionalized a process of isolating children from their peers and families as a method of dealing with their special needs. This tends to reinforce in them a sense of being different and inferior--a sense of self which can severly limit any possibility of their educational development.

Third, failure to develop an adequate system of publicly-supported educational services sent parents and children into limbo. Those who had been informed that a school committee

could not feasibly educate their child must search through a maze of agencies and offices, private and public, organized to provide the educational and human services to which they were entitled. The persons whom they petitioned for such programs were not malicious; the system in which they worked simply had no imagination and the funds available through it were inadequate. It was built on anti-educational assumptions and definitions, and its funds were directed toward a child's maintenance with too little available for his development.

Resistance to Change

Efforts to improve the situation and create strong publicly-supported educational services for children with special needs met deep-rooted resistance. Questions surrounding such changes tended not to be defined as between those for and those against programs for these children, but between opposing concepts of such children. Opponents of the Special Education Act searched for arguments that would not make them appear to be against children with special needs, and they settled on the criticism that the bill raised false hopes for such children.

With varying degrees of intensity opponents of the bill shared the assumption that children with special needs could not be educated in regular public school settings. On that assumption had been built a system that, having identified a handicapped child, took him away from his normal peers, to live away in a residential institution, to spend his days at

home or to attend only "special classes," sometimes in buildings or basements far away from the regular public school facilities.

It had not been for lack of compassion that such a system for isolating children with special needs grew. We had simply bound up our system with definitions which center on handicaps and failed to see educational and social needs. Governed by such definitions no other system could have developed. Given such assumptions, Massachusetts acted as compassionately and responsibly toward her children with special needs as any state. Nonetheless, these assumptions were responsible for our overlooking vast reservoirs of creativity and learning ability in such children, and refusing to help them build strong and mutually helpful social relations with each other and "normal" peers. Surely, these assumptions must crumble when their effects are proven to be needlessly destructive and inhuman. Did they?

Victories in Court

In 1893 a Massachusetts court held in Watson v. City of Cambridge that a school committee could expel a student whose conduct was disorderly "either voluntarily or by reason of imbecility." In 1919 a Wisconsin court in State ex rel Beattie v. Board of Education agreed with arguments suggesting that a school could exclude a child whose learning ability was normal but whose handicaps produced "a depressing and nauseating effect on the teachers and school children." That court declared that "the rights of a

child of school age to attend the public schools of the state cannot be insisted upon, when its presence therein is harmful to the best interest of the school." In 1967 the Wisconsin Attorney General reaffirmed the right to exclude a child but shifted the emphasis by declaring that the obligation to educate the child persists and some alternative must be provided.

A dramatic shift of direction has occurred in the last six years, however, in Utah, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. Courts in these states have declared that a policy of segregating and isolating handicapped children denies those children the ability gained through education to exercise rights guaranteed them by the United States Constitution. The Pennsylvania court was quite clear in rejecting that state's law permitting a classification of children as "non-educable." These courts insist that if the states provide for the education of all children then they MUST provide education for handicapped children as well.

Supported by these judicial declarations, many organizations took up the fight. Congress and HEW declared handicapped children as a national priority, and in Massachusetts group after group, study after study, supplied data to demonstrate the woeful lack of programs and the deficiencies within the programs that exist.

These influences combined to allow the Massachusetts Legislature to transcend individual and cultural attitudes and design the Special Education Act to open up a world of

opportunities for children with special needs and to create obligations and reorientation for the state and the local school committees. The immediate catalyst and the driving force behind this legislative achievement, however, was a coalition of groups organized for children with special needs in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Coalition for Special Education.

Special Coalition

The Coalition's members negotiated through long, frustrating meetings with both their own organizations and members and with opponents who feared that public schools would not develop adequate programs even given a mandate.

Since the major problems foreseen by opponents focused on the period of transition between passage of the bill and the establishment of the programs and services it mandated, the major agreement reached through their meetings was to ensure in the language of the bill that no child in a special program when the act became effective would be removed without the parent's written consent.

The impetus for building this coalition arose largely from the office of Michael J. Daly, (D, Boston), the House Chairman of the Education Committee, and House Speaker David M. Bartley, both of whom had learned much about such organizing the previous year when they co-sponsored the Massachusetts Bilingual Education Act. These two legislators and their staffs

developed the special education bill through a series of drafting meetings involving over 30 organizations and hundreds of individuals. Through much of the groundwork for the legislation was completed and the bill filed before the 1972 legislative session, it underwent four complete new drafts by the time it reached the Governor's desk seven months later. Each of the redrafts emerged out of the citizens' meetings called by Daly and Bartley, and as a result hundreds of people grew to feel that the bill was theirs, since they themselves had drafted it.

The coalition needed a high level of involvement in order to overcome the reluctance of the legislature to enact a massive institutional solution to a problem legislators have dealt with only in personal ways: to find programs for constituents with handicapped children.

The New Law

The coalition's process of negotiation with potential opponents resulted in the growth of its own membership so that, by the end of the session, legislators were receiving hundreds of letters and calls a week in support of the bill. Legislators were convinced, and the Bartley-Daly Act was sent to the Governor to be signed early in July of 1972.

The major symbolic thrust of the Bartley-Daly Act is found in its break from the old system of categories and labels. This new law uses only one category for the distribution of the Commonwealth's special education funds, and the articulation

of its mandate, "child with special needs." Thus any further distinctions among such children to determine their particular needs are left up to the state department of education, division of special education and the local communities.

Implementing the Challenge

The new statue became effective in September, 1974, thus giving time to local communities and state agencies to develop the mandated special-education services. However, several dangers lie in wait, which can only be overcome by statewide coalitions and the development of similar coalitions in every town, city and region in the Commonwealth.

To the extent that a new law is ambitious it has hope of strong implementation only where local citizens unite to ensure action. Here, parents, teachers and any other groups committed to the development of strong local education programs for children with special needs will have to work with the same commitment and strength as the statewide group did for the special education bill in order to direct a town's resources toward establishing those programs. Without such an effort, the local response to a mandate as far-reaching as this bill is likely to be to try to repeal the law, or to ask for a waiver.

Administrative Initiatives

An Inter-Agency Discussion Group was organized to coordinate

the multitude of services that would be required to serve the special needs student population. The issues addressed by the Special Education Act cut across agency lines, making on-going inter-agency coordination and cooperation a prerequisite to successful implementation of the law.

The group membership included representation from: the Department of Education, the Office for Children, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, Administration and Finance, the Governor's Office, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) and the Association of Special Educators (A.S.E.).

In its weekly meetings, the group successfully tackled complicated problems of jurisdiction, established consensus on volatile issues, and smoothed the way for cooperation among state agencies in delivering needed social and educational services. Issues dealt with by the group included the development of a means for assisting schools in obtaining services which are not appropriately delivered at the local level; shifting responsibility for providing services from one agency to another; the development of interdepartmental referral system and joint efforts in obtaining various federal entitlements. In addition, the group has encouraged the development of

community based programs for deinstitutionalized students. The discussion group was further involved in the initial development of coordinated strategies, (e.g., multi-purpose collaboratives) to solving continuing programmatic, fiscal and governance problems.

Teacher Training Needed

The new law specified several educational options which should be available for children with special needs, one of which would be placement in a regular classroom with special additional instruction. Before such a move could be made beneficially, however, regular teachers have to be trained t deal creatively with such a situation. The structure of services for children need to be made capable of meeting the child's special needs. But a community reluctant to divert resources toward the provision of such services and annoyed at a state-imposed requirement can torpedo the intent of the Bartley-Daly Act by refusing to plan, declaring, "The state told us to integrate your severly distrubed child with this class of normal children. Don't blame us."

Such tactics will emerge rarely, but similar possibilities for throwing school systems into chaos as they move to implement the act are numerous. To avoid chaos there must be strong state enforcement and statewide teacher in-service training support combined with efforts by well-organized consumer advocates on local levels to education and pressure communities to design and establish good programs.

The overriding goal of the Massachusetts Special Education Act is nothing less than to direct society's resources toward the fullest possible development of every child's potential. Nothing but a massive, nearly unbelievable change in attitudes and educational systems can accomplish such a goal. That goal could equally well be extended to include the development of every person's potential.

A Look Ahead

The major challenge in the continued successful implementation of the Special Education Act will be to provide local school systems with the expertise and financial resources that will enable them to comply with the law. If this challenge is to be met, fundamental changes must be made in the way schools are financed in the Commonwealth.

The issue of school finance reform is crucial to the success not only of the Special Education Act, but of Massachusetts education in general. Massachusetts currently ranks 46th in the nation in per-capita state aid to local education agencies--a direct reflection of the Commonwealth's heavy reliance on local property taxes in financing the public schools. The result of such over-reliance on the local property tax is that school children receiving differing amounts of educational resources, depending upon where they live. This situation is in direct contrast to that mandated by the Special Education Act (i.e., that all children in the Commonwealth receive equal educational opportunity and an appropriate educational program).

Reforms are needed which would simultaneously remove such inequities, increase per-capita state aid to local education agencies, and replace the current reimbursement formula with a forward-funding mechanism that would permit school committees to use state aid to offset local school appropriations.

So here we are again--identifying a need, working toward a solution--and at the same time highlighting another need: school finance reform.

New Opportunities for Educators

Educators, it seems to me, can view the envolvement with politics sketched above either as a threat or an opportunity. By becoming defensive, and insisting upon the independence of their function, they will only guarantee the negative influence of politics on education. If, on the other hand, educators see it as an opportunity to bring their problems to the public, to debate and participate in the political process, to allow outsiders inside, the new involvement can give them new influence, new power and thereby guarantee the continued relevance of their function to America's great problems.

The great significance of education to the crises which face our society are self-evident. The educator faces a challenge more demanding than probably any other professional. To meet that challenge offers an opportunity to make a greater contribution than anyone else.

All of this means that life will not be easy for the

educator, but since education is where the action is, that, too, is where the educator must be if he is to do justice to his role.

FIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE PLANNING

A Summing Up

The Editors

What are the implications of these three papers? Hamilton told us that a number of states, institutions, and educational systems have conducted learning needs analysis studies as part of their planning activities. Unfortunately, some of these studies suffer from design or instrumentation inadequacies that leave their findings open to question; others are not focused on the specific questions of immediate use to those who help redesign curriculums or develop new institutional programs. A few recent state studies are beginning to provide detailed and useful need data, however, as the state of the art improves.

There remain, however, the majority of states and hundreds of universities which have not yet conducted analyses of the probable need for flexible and extended educational resources in their respective service regions. It is clear that many of them will. One can readily surmize that a number of these studies will suffer from some of the same problems which plagued earlier efforts: institutions will invent the need analysis wheel once again. Moreover, few of these studies will integrate data from the several sources available to the researchers, including observations from educational brokering agencies.

Hamilton also concludes that certain lessons can be drawn from a comparison of existing studies, and a review of adult learning theory, that frees the researchers from needless replication and allows them to concentrate their inquiry to those questions which deliver the greatest pay-off. The cost/benefit ratio of studies can thus be improved.

Callan introduced us to the role of state planning agencies, and their vital balancing act between the competing demands of the states' systems of education and the dwindling reservoirs of resources and good will available for education from state officials and the population through their elected representatives. He stresses the adjudicating and prioritizing function of coordinating agencies: all postsecondary demands must be taken into account when planning studies reveal the need for new services. In this environment, only the strongest and most persuasive studies will survive the process.

Pressure to conduct statewide learning needs analysis studies for currently unserved potential learners will likely not originate in a state's coordinating council itself. Some other source probably carries the burden of advocacy---an institution, a legislative committee, the governor, consumer groups, or some educational enterpreneur. For the most part, coordinating agencies are preoccupied with planning to meet the enrollment demands of conventional college age students.

The experience of a dozen states in recent years bears out this assertion.

Callen also points out that educational delivery models developed in one state or by one institution can rarely be exported wholesale and replanted in a different state. Too many unique features exist in any state to allow easy transition and adaption. Thus each state must determine for itself the set of resources to develop and apply to demonstrated learning needs. This complicated process leads to the creation of unusual new institutions, far-flung consortiums, and exotic delivery systems, some of which will not meet the test of time.

O'Donnell, on the other hand, struck a realistic note: skillful partisan envolvement is the legislative process in the only way for educators to make sure their needs are heard. The more deeply legislators become concerned with the allocation of scarce resrouces to an array of social demands, the more they will be conscious of educational programs rather than the more simple politics of general tax support. They will need to be convinced that recommended new programs are important to the welfare of their state's citizenry, and that educational needs can be successfully defended in the face of other competing social demands. Their lot is not an easy one, for they must answer to the people at the next election.

O'Donnell makes it very clear that the discussion of educational issues is no longer confined to educators. All significant state government actors, including the general public and their opinions, figure in the equation of the political process. Planners must recon with these elements, and play a significant role in state politics if they are to be successful. The enactment of the Massachusetts Special Education Law provides a vivid example that cannot be ignored.

Five Implications

What we see as one important implication is that an original learning needs analysis study must be as comprehensive, as carefully conducted, and as appealingly presented as possible. All the significant partisans in a state - the state planning and coordinating body, the legislature, the governor, the existing institutions, and a healthy proportion of the people - must somehow be apprised of the significance of the study's findings, and see the compelling nature of its arguments. The translation of that argument into a well-designed institutional response is also a critical factor, but not as important overall as an unimpeachable first effort.

The specific institutional response, after all, depends upon an appraisal of the capabilities of the existing institutions against the need for new resources. Responses

can be designed and created by the institutions themselves, the state planning agency, and perhaps the legislature, working together. There are many problems and much room for competitive maneuvering in these negotiations, of course, but these are essentially program building problems, not case-making problems. The latter, it seems to us, is more crucial to ultimate success.

A second implication is that some mechanism must be present for state and institutional planners to benefit from the work done by others over the last decade. There is a tendency for institution and state level planners to plunge ahead into major studies and developmental planning without taking into account the experiences and findings of other institutions and states in previous planning cycles. A conference bringing together directors of state studies on adult learning needs which took place in early 1976 provides a roster of persons who could be used as consultants (see footnote 13, page 36). "NEXUS," the people-to-people service sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education, might also be helpful in finding persons who can provide important consultation. And the information clearinghouse function of the Office of New Degree Programs at the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service can be utilized in a search for assistance. Whoever is assisting, the early stages of a state's planning

would seem to be the most appropriate time to digest the lessons of the past.

Third, it seems clear from the current interest in conducting learning needs studies that some standard instrumentation, at least with respect to a set of core questions which have been proved successful, ought to be readily available to institutions and agencies planning to determin their responsibilities. A variety of data collection instruments have been used in recent studies - some sophisticated, others home-grown. Either can contain some questions which may be very fruitful while others yield little of value.

The potential exists for a consolidation of the most successful questions into a bank which can be drawn upon for particular studies of a specified population group. Further, since many institutional research personnel may not have access to powerful analytical programs for computerized analysis of data, a service that provides inexpensive, swift and reliable analysis ought also to be available.

Some successful questions can easily be identified. Over a dozen studies have used as the basic instrument an adaption of the ETS survey instrument developed for the Commission on Nontraditional Study and conducted in 1972 (see footnote 12 page 36). Several of the questions on this instrument have yielded consistently useful information.

A fourth implication which troubles the editors is the apparent high cost of planning studies. Major state studies in California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, New York (where a set of regional studies were conducted), and Ontario, Canada are clearly high cost analyses, some approaching a quarter of a million dollars. Other state studies in Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Texas are moderately expensive. And a few local or regional studies, where many of the methodological and conceptual problems have occurred, are relatively inexpensive. The sources of funding for the major studies have been various, but we have noted that the natural sources - project funds available for planning through state 1202 Commissions, or for community service projects under HEA (1965) Title I, have generally not been utilized. Either the amount of funds available for each state under 1202 formulas or limiting regulations on use of Title I funds have prevented their use. Some states have consequently been frustrated in their attempts to conduct needs studies.

We feel that the cost of studies, once standard instruments, procedures, and analytical services are available, can be brought down considerably. Further, the cost of designing appropriate programs or services can similarly be reduced if those who are most familiar with the variety of models existing or proposed across the country can be

enlisted to assist in planning. As a result, states or institutions might well be able to conduct both needs studies and develop program designs at an expense level well within their discretionary fund capabilities.

A final implication that can be drawn as one looks into the future is that states should not be satisfied with one-shot studies to determin learning needs. As resources are brought to bear on one identified need or another, a continuing effort should be an important component of state planning cycles. Trends can only be discerned through multi-year analyses; therefore, it will be important to demonstrate the effectiveness of the state educational system through a series of continuing studies utilizing comparable results.

As yet no state, with the possible exception of New York, has set up a permanent adult learning needs data collection system. We think such a system will be needed in the future, and we urge state planners to begin thinking of cost effective ways of arranging for a continuing flow of useful information.

Summary

In sum, the editors of this volume feel that the planning process for educational programs designed to meet demands for lifelong learning opportunities is at an early and rudimentary stage. Progress has been made in recent years, but the clear need exists for a set of services to assist states, systems, and institutions conduct high quality, inexpensive, and continuing

studies of their service regions. We urge appropriate agencies to consider developing these services, and institutions to adopt them for their own benefit, and for the benefit of all people.